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AUTHOR McKillip, Jack
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ABSTRACT

Kruglanski's endogenous-exogenous partition, when applied to reasons given by smokers for smoking cigarettes, distinguishes two types of actions: (1) endogenous reasons implying that the behavior of consuming the cigarette is the goal of the action and the actor is positive toward the behavior, and (2) exogenous reasons implying that the behavior is meant to further some unrelated goal and the actor is negative toward the behavior. Through a combination of these ideas with the notion that smokers try to deny responsibility for the behavior they enjoy, the hypothesis was formulated that heavy smokers would show a stronger preference for positively affected behavior than light smokers. The reason college smokers and non-smokers give for cigarette smoking was examined from this endogenous-exogenous attributional perspective. Eight reasons for smoking, categorized as means (exogenous), ends (endogenous) of occurrences were rated by 66 current smokers and 71 students who never smoked. Findings revealed that smokers rated occurrence and ends reasons as more important than non- smokers. Heavy smokers showed greater preference for ends over means reasons than did non-smokers. The results showed support for the hypothesis. (Author)

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Read at the Convention of the Midwestern Psychological Association, St. Louis, 1980. Address comments to Jack McKillip, Department of Psychology, Carbondale, Illinois 62901.

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EXPLAINING CIGARETTE SMOKING:

AN ENDOGENOUS-EXOGENOUS ANALYSIS

Jack McKillip
Southern Illinois University at Carbondale

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As Arie Kruglanski (1980) has recently noted, much of the confusion surrounding attribution formulations (e.g., Nisbett & Wilson, 1977) arises from ambigously phrased causal questions. One of the original attribution theorists, Aristotle, suggested four possible ways of answering the question "Why?", two of which are: (a) in terms of the efficient cause, the factor which brings about some effect; and (b) in terms of the final cause, the end for which the effect is produced. Other category systems involve person-situation, internal-external or endogenous-exogenous partitions. Kruglanski (1980) further points out that the appropriate attribution formulation will depend on the specific epistemic problem formulated by the person answering the causal question.

In the area in which I have been working--asking the question "Why do you (smokers) smoke cigarettes?"--the difficulty in applying particular attribution formulations is illustrated by the answer "addiction." This cause for smoking can be taken either as efficient or final and either internal, implying that other actors would behave differently, or external, implying that the behavior is beyond the individual's control (Eiser & Sutton, 1977; Eiser, Sutton & Wober, 1977, 1978). Smokers who say that they are addicted can have their cake and eat it too--they smoke because they are hooked and can resist pressures to quit because they do not

control the behavior.

Because of difficulties others (Eiser & Sutton, 1977; Eiser, et al., 1977, 1978) have had applying the internal-external partition to the explanations people give for smoking, I attempted to apply what appeared to be a more useful formulation to this area, i.e., Kruglanski's endogenous-exogenous partition (1975). Table 1 presents the key terms

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Insert Table 1 about here

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in this formulation. The first distinction drawn between various explanations for behavior is that of occurances and actions. Occurances are reasons which imply that the behavior, here cigarette smoking, is independent of the actor's will. Since, as Heider (1958) indicates, such behaviors lack the critical component (intentionality) which is necessary for personal causation, this type of explanation releases the actor from responsibility for the behavior. Actions, on the other hand, are reasons which imply that the behavior was voluntary and thus that the actor is responsible for the behavior. Two types of actions are distinguished: (a) endogenous reasons or ends, implying that the behavior itself, i.e., consuming the ciagrette, is the goal of the action and implying that the actor is positive toward the behavior; and (b) exogenous reasons or means, implying that the behavior is meant to further some other, unrelated, goal and implying that the actor is negative toward the behavior.

Combining these ideas with the notion mentioned earlier that smokers try to deny responsibility for the behavior that they enjoy, the following hypotheses were advanced:

Hypothesis 1: Smokers will indicate that occurance reasons are more important for their smoking than will non-smokers.

Explanation: Smokers want to deny responsibility for smoking while non-smokers will hold smokers responsible for the behavior.

Hypothesis 2: Smokers will indicate greater importance for endogenous (ends) than exogenous (means) reasons for smoking than will non-smokers.

Explanation: Smokers like smoking and thus will greatly prefer positively affected over negatively affected reasons for their behavior. Non-smokers do not like smoking.

Hypothesis 3: Heavy smokers will indicate greater importance for endogenous (ends) than exogenous (means) reasons for smoking than will light smokers.

Explanation: The frequency with which individuals engage in a behavior indicates how much they enjoy the behavior. Therefore, heavy smokers will show a stronger preference for positively as compared to negatively affected explanations than will light smokers.

METHOD

One hundred ninty students selected randomly in public gathering places on the campus of Southern Illinois University at Carbondale were surveyed concerning: (a) smoking history, used to divide respondents into current smokers (N=66) and those who never smoked (N=71) and to further divide the current smokers into light (smoking half a pack a day or less) smokers (N=30) and heavy (smoking more than half a pack per day) smokers[1] (N=36); and (b) ratings of importance for each of the eight reasons for smoking (by self or other, depending on smoking history). The eight reasons had previously been coded as being: (a) occurances, i.e., smoking because at a party, because addicted, because there was nothing else to do, or because cigarettes were available; (b) exogenous, i.e., smoking because of an image or because of a social ritual; and (c) endogenous, i.e., smoking because it is enjoyable or because it releases tension.

RESULTS

The results relevant to comparisons of smokers with non-smokers are presented in Table 2. The first hypothesis stated that smokers would

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Insert Table 2 about here

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rate occurances as more important than would non-smokers. The means for this comparison are shown in the first column of Table 2. Analysis revealed that smokers did indeed rate occurances as more important than those who never smoked ($t(135)=3.60$, $p<.05$).

The second hypothesis suggested an interaction between smoking history and the exogenous-endogenous partition. The means for this comparison are shown in the final two columns of Table 2. Analysis revealed that this interaction was significant ($F(1,132)=6.59$, $p<.05$). Smokers rated endogenous reasons as approximately 2.6 units more important than exogenous reasons while this difference was only .6 units for non-smokers.

Table 3 presents the mean importance ratings for the interaction between heavy and light smoking and the exogenous-endogenous partition suggested by the third hypothesis. This interaction was significant

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Insert Table 3 about here

($F(1,64)=4.21$, $p<.05$). Heavy smokers rated endogenous reasons approximately 2.9 units more important than exogenous reasons while this difference was only about 1.2 units for light smokers.

DISCUSSION

The results of the study are clearly in line with the prediction derived from Kruglanski's (1975) formulation. It appears that the

college smokers surveyed used the endogenous-exogenous partition but those who never smoked did not. This result seems to refute Zuckerman's (1977) contention that Kruglanski's formulation is not useful in predicting the reason people will give for their behavior. Also, the paper supports Eiser's notion (Eiser & Sutton, 1977; Eiser, et al., 1977, 1978) that smokers want to deny responsibility while continuing to engage in their otherwise illogical behavior.

The most interesting theoretical question raised by the study is (you guessed it): "Why?" Why did smokers and non-smokers differ on their attribution patterns? Kruglanski (1980) suggests that the process (as opposed to the content) of attribution can be reduced to the identification of "non-commonly deductable" causes - as if when responding to an experimenter's causal question the subject tries to give a "correct" answer. I would hypothesize simply that in some situations (such as the one reported on in this paper) the attribution process involves identifying the "cause" which fits best with the respondent's image of himself/herself and/or is most likely to be accepted by the audience hearing the explanation.

FOOTNOTES

1. This criterion was selected because consumption of a half pack of cigarettes per day is about at the median for reports from college smokers (McKillip & Vierke, 1980).

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TABLE 1

TYPES OF REASONS (KRUGLANSKI, 1975)

1. OCCURANCES -- independent of will

2. ACTIONS -- voluntary

   A. ENDOGENOUS/ENDS -- consumatory, more positive affect, greater subjective freedom, behavioral content immediately identifies goal

   B. EXOGENOUS/MEANS -- conjunction of goal and situation, less positive affect, less subjective freedom, behavioral content does not reveal goal or intention

TABLE 2

Smoking History	Occurance	Type of Reason Exogenous	Endogenous
Smoker	4.66	3.03	5.67
Never Smoked	4.03	3.55	4.19

NOTE: Importance ratings ranged from "extremely unimportant" (1) to "extremely important" (7).

TABLE 3

IMPORTANCE OF REASONS FOR SMOKING FOR SMOKERS

Consumption	Type of Reason	
	Exogenous	Endogenous
Light	3.20	4.41
Heavy	2.99	5.90

NOTE: Importance ratins ranged from "extremely unimportant" (1) to "extremely important" (7).